

THE BHARATA-ADIBHARATA PROBLEM AND THE
MS OF ADIBHARATA IN THE GOVERNMENT
ORIENTAL LIBRARY, MYSORE.

BY

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As various hypotheses have been offered for the solution of the *Bharata-Ādibharata* problem it is desirable to record data bearing on the problem from all sources possible. The following data has been recorded so far :—

1. Dr. P. R. Bhandarkar in one of his articles in the *Indian Antiquary*¹ observes:

“Rāghavabhatta mentions a work called Ādibharata. A Ms with this name exists in the Mysore Oriental Library.”

2. Mr. Manmohan Ghoshe² has collected these quotations from Rāghavabhatta's commentary on the *Abhijñāna-Śākuntala*. According to him the quotations from the *Ādibharata* are 19 in number, while those from *Bharata* are 9 only. Out of these quotations from *Bharata*, seven are traceable in the extant editions of the *Nāṭya-Śāstra* while two have their parallels in it.

3. Mr. M. R. Kavi³ possesses some fragments of a work called *Sadāśivabharata* which according to him may be the *Ādibharata*.

4. Aufrecht mentions a work on *alamkāra* called “*ādi-bharata-prastāra*” (No. 4991 of Oppert's Catalogue) the subject matter of which is stated to be *Bharataśāstra*.

Dr. S. K. De makes the following remarks⁴ regarding the problem :—

“It appears that the term *bharata* in course of time came to mean the dramatic art generally as it also came to mean the actor ; and Rāghavabhatta on *Śākuntalā* expressly refers to *ādibharata* by whom he means our author in contradistinction to these later *bharatas*. ”

Mr. Manmohan Ghoshe observes in this connection: “ If the *Ādibharata* and *Bharata* prove to be two different works it will only strengthen the general belief that the extant *Nāṭyaśāstra* is not the work of a single author. ”

1. Vol. XLI, p. 158.

2. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, March 1930, pp. 75-80.

3. *Nāṭyaśāstra* (G. O. S.) Vol. I., pp. 5f of the Preface.

4. *Sanskrit Poetics*, Vol. I, p. 24, foot note 3.

In view of the foregoing data leading to two different views regarding the identity of *Bharata* and *Ādibharata* or otherwise I wanted to verify the statement of Dr. P. R. Bhandarkar by actual examination of the Mysore Ms of the *Ādibharata* referred to by him. This Ms is described in the Catalogue of the Mysore Oriental Library (1894), p. 108 as follows:—

“590. आदिभरतम् श्रीभरताचार्यप्रणीतम्
(472) आ. ८५ प. असमयम्”

With the kindness of the Curator of the Mysore Oriental Library I was able to get on loan the so-called Ms of the *Ādibharata* tallying outwardly with the description of the Catalogue given above. On actual examination, however, this work in *Andhra* characters turned out to be a regular Ms of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in an incomplete condition, only 15 chapters being extant in this copy with a folio of matter from the 16th Chapter¹. The Ms begins with the following verse:—

“ वेदोपवेदसंबंधो नाट्यवेदो महात्मनाम्
एवं भगवता सृष्टो ब्रह्मणा ललितात्मकः ” ॥ १ ॥

The above verse appears as verse 18th in the Baroda Edition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (1928) and the Benares Edition (1929).

The colophon of the 1st chapter is as under:—

“ इति भारतीयनाट्यशास्त्रे नाट्योत्पत्तिर्नाम प्रथमोऽध्यायः । ”

The colophon of the 15th chapter reads—

“ इति भारतीयनाट्यशास्त्रे वाचिकाभिनये छंदोविधानं नाम पञ्चदशोऽध्यायः ”

The present disclosure has removed the possibility of the existence of a Ms of the work of *Ādibharata* as a work on *Nāṭyaśāstra* distinct and separate from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* commonly ascribed to *Bharata*. It appears further to corroborate the view of Dr. De that the term *Ādibharata* was used with reference to the author of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in contradistinction to the later *Bharatas*.

1. After the present note was written I inquired of Mr. M. R. Kavi if he has made use of this Ms (labelled as *Ādibharata* but actually *Bhāraṭya Nāṭyaśāstra*) in his Gaikwar Oriental Series edition. He first wrote in reply that out of the two Mss used by him, one has 33 chapters, the other has only 15 chapters. He further informed me that “in the Mysore Library 4472 is *Nāṭyaśāstra* consisting of 15 chapters. The number may be a mistake for 472.” I next inquired of the Curator of the Mysore Library if Mr. Kavi has made use of this Ms. I was informed by the Curator, curiously enough, that no reference can be traced of Mr. M. R. Kavi having borrowed or used any of the Mss on *Nāṭyaśāstra* in his Library. This reply stopped my inquiry any further.